

The REFORMED JOURNAL

Volume 1 — No. 10

A Periodical of Reformed Comment and Opinion

December, 1951

SEASON'S GREETINGS

is Christmas time.

This year is running down to its end. And if the Lord permits, the New Year will soon begin.

GREETINGS to you all, in Christ Jesus our Savior.

He is the heart of Christmas, in Whom is all its meaning, its glory, its power, its joy. And what He is for Christmas, He is for every time, for the world — God Incarnate, God with us.

It is so easy to get lost in the little things, and to lose the Big Thing.

Ah, those pretty lights, the charming toys, the spirit of holiday, all those presents in bright wrappings, red flowers in dead winter, and color-lit scenes when white snow falls and cold winds blow, the children sprawling over the floor with whirring trains, toy gun-yards, dolls and cradles, clicking along Cassidy guns, laughing, cheering, shouting; and my tie looks so nice in the box, and the lounging so so clean and pressed and new.

It makes me feel good — all of that. It's like a moment of paradise. But when I know it's only a moment, and it isn't paradise. And these are the little things — the things that just wear out or get worn, old, broken, and lose their lustre and usefulness.

Lord Jesus, unspeakable gift of God's unspeakable love — help me to count all these things, and many more, as loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. And give me grace to be found in Him, to be made one with Him in the fellowship of His suffering, His death, and the power of His resurrection. For He alone is Beauty, in Whom

men saw no beauty. He is my song forever, Who once cried in the crib and groaned on the cross. He is my everlasting treasure, Whom men reject and Whom they once sold for thirty miserable coins. He is my ceaseless joy, Who hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows — stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. He is my light and my salvation, Who was swallowed up in awful darkness.

And if I love the little things — and I do, and I think I may, for Thou didst give them and dost enrich them — help me to love them in Thy name, and for Thy sake, and as pointing beyond to Thee who art All and in All.

* * *

THIS year is running down to its end.

This is our little way of thinking. It is right, because there are days and weeks, and seasons and years. God put them in His creation. And we reckon time from the big clocks — the

sun and moon — that He put in the heavens.

And yet, it is a little thing — this way of telling time.

What after all is the difference between December 31 and January 1? Nothing, really. January 1 finds one person the same old man in the same old world. December 31 finds another — the Christian — already renewed with youth; and being a new creature in Christ, he knows that the old is already passed away, behold, it is become new.

Jesus, my eternal Christmas present, makes all the difference. He is our big way of thinking, and in Him our thinking and reckoning has meaning — and only in Him.

We still live our little times, to be sure. There is today and tomorrow. There is Old Year and New Year. But the flux and change doesn't buffet me and throw me about. Nor does it save or give hope of saving to others.

Because the end is already. In Christ "It is finished!" And while I

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S.F.T.S.

SEASON'S GREETINGS — Continued

live my little times, with change from day to day, there is my Christ who is above the times and above all change, and Who is now gathering up the End which He has already made. And when my time runs out, I will have no more thought or experience of the old that has already passed away.

* * *

THE NEW Year will soon begin, if God permits.

But why the clanging bells, the screaming whistles, the sharp report of guns? What do men cheer? What do they think to herald? Another day? Another year? But January 1 is the same old thing as December 31, with the same old headache, the same old heartache.

It is our little way of thinking that sees in January 1 a new beginning. But in the things that really count there is no newness. The new resolutions get stuck in the same old heart. The new hopes are overtaken and swallowed up by the same old gloomy past.

But in Christ there is a difference.

For those who are in Him, the new *was already* on December 31. "If any

man is in Christ, he is a new creature," all things, even the self, is become new. It was new for me already on December 31. It was new for me way back there when I stood at my mother's grave. I heard it: "I am the resurrection and the life . . . whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die."

Why should I look for the new that I already have? Why should I look forward to January 1 for what is already given? Lord, help me; for I live so much in the old, and so often look for the new in a powerless tomorrow. Lord Jesus, help me to put on the new man Thou hast already made me to be. Help me to live in the newness of life which Thou hast already given in fulsome grace. Let me live in the power of the Beginning that Thou art and hast made.

* * *

Christ is all the soul and substance of Christmas.

He is the End of all that is old and passed away.

He is the Beginning of the new that He has made.

He is Christ, the Beginning and the End, and the Center, and All.

* * *

Report to Our Readers

WE had not expected to report again so soon. But the large and quick response to our request for renewals and new subscriptions calls for it. Even more are we moved by the *kind* of response.

One thing that greatly encourages is the fact that so many of our readers have sent in so many new subscriptions with their own renewals. To us that means that you like the *Journal* well enough to want others to share it. Even better, it means that you are fellows with us in this journalistic venture. That is just what we intended and what we prayed for. The Church, our communion, the Kingdom, are our *common* concern. In all these things — and now, we are happy to find, in the *Journal* as belonging to them — we are fellow-laborers.

And we are gratified — and humbled, too — for the appreciative and

heartening comments many of you have sent. It means much to find a note like this coming in with a renewal: "I am more than pleased with your *Journal*. *I have been blessed*. Rev. . . . and I discuss every issue with eagerness and profit. My only regret is that we didn't have it sooner. May God continue to bless and prosper your *Journal*."

There was another note we want to put down here. Here it is, in part: "Probably it is because of policy that *The Reformed Journal* has no readers' column. The 'letters to the Editor' may not be very useful in matters of debate, but the mere existence of such a column would have the effect of making the reader feel that he is a participant. Without it there is almost some aloofness. To heighten reader interest, and to gauge reader reaction it would

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EDITORIAL BOARD

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Published each month by the
Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

Subscription price: \$2.00 per year

Entered as Second Class Matter at the Post
office at Grand Rapids, Mich.

Address all subscriptions and communica-
tions to:

THE REFORMED JOURNAL
255 Jefferson Avenue, S. E.
Grand Rapids 3, Mich.

In this season the Editors greet you
all in Him, our common Lord, our
Beginning and End, our All in All.

GEORGE STOB

be a valuable department, I would
think."

We think the same. Perhaps it was
wrong of us not to have published
some of the letters written in response
to some of our articles. But we did
feel free to publish what appeared to
personal letters to one or another
of the editors.

Be sure, however, that we shall
eager to publish your letters; and
shall hereafter take the liberty of doing
so if they are addressed to *The Reformed Journal*. We certainly do want
you to feel that you are a participant
and to have the freedom to participate.
We assuredly do want to know your
reactions and, not the least, your criticisms.
And we want the rest of our
readers to know them, too.

And so we repeat here what we said
in our first issue: "There will be space
for 'letters to the editors,' — and

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portunity, on the condition that due proprieties are observed, for reader assent, question, and criticism." So here is your invitation, twice-given. This is no flat promise to publish everything. We have the editorial

charge to be discreet and responsible. You expect us to exercise a good conscience on that score, and to be mindful of the well-being of the *Journal*, of our readers, and of our communion.

We pledge that again, as we did before.

But, if the reaction we have had from you so far is a gauge, we expect no large problems on that score. So, come along! THE EDITORS

Are We Neglecting THE MINISTRY OF MERCY?

by IDZERD VAN DELLEN

IN Article 30 of the Belgic Confession we read: "We believe that the true Church [of which Articles 27-29 speak] must be governed by that spiritual polity which our Lord has taught us in His Word; namely, that there must be ministers or pastors to teach the Word of God and to administer the sacraments; also elders and deacons who, together with the pastors, form the council of the church."

There seems to be a discrepancy on this point between the Confession and the Church Order, Article 37, where it is stipulated that "in all churches there shall be a Consistory composed of the Ministers of the Word and the elders"; and further: "Wherever the number of Elders is small, the Deacons may be added to the consistory by local regulation; this shall invariably be the rule where the number is less than three." Not only here, but also in other articles, the Church Order distinguishes between the Consistory and the Deacons (see Articles 4 and 11). The Deacons meet separately, according to Article 40—"The deacons shall meet, wherever necessary, every week to transact the business pertaining to their office, calling upon the name of God."

* * *

HOWEVER, when we study our Confession and the Church Order together with the Forms of Installation for the various office-bearers, we find that there is no real difference between Confession and Church Order. We state the following:

All the offices receive their particular, well-defined mandate. To each office a special task is assigned.

At the same time, the three offices constitute one body. In Christ they are one. As the Christ, He is anointed to be the Great Prophet, the only High Priest, and the Eternal King. Those offices are also one in the apostolate. It proved to be necessary, however, that there should be division of labor. Hence, we notice that there are elders who labor in the Word and in teaching, and others who are called to rule the Church (I Tim. 5:17), and deacons, whose task it is to provide for the poor (Phil. 1:1; Acts 6:1-2). But together they form one body, which body the Confession calls the Council of the Church, or the Consistory.

This indicates that the various offices should not work independently of each other. There must be contact between them. They must cooperate because together they represent Christ in His three-fold office, and together they must labor to the upbuilding of the Church, the body of Christ.

This cooperation, however, may not bear such a character that the offices lose their identity, so that the elders do the work of the deacons, while the deacons act as elders, or the elders perform the specific duties of the ministers of the Word. To prevent this the Church Order distinguishes between the meetings of the elders (ministers and ruling elders), and the meetings of the deacons. And because the Church Order calls the former meeting the Consistory, there seemingly is a discrepancy between the Church Order and the Confession. It would be better if that assembly had been designated by another name. "Presbytery" would have been a good name, though this also might lead to confusion, be-

cause the Presbyterian churches call their meetings of neighboring churches (our Classes) Presbyteries, and their meeting of pastor and elders the Session.

It is evident that there is no real difference between Confession and Church Order, because both maintain the specific character of each of the offices and also acknowledge that there must be cooperation and collaboration, since all three offices represent Christ and serve the one Church, the body of Christ.

Considering the above, it is in accord with both Confession and Church Order to stipulate that there should be separate meetings of elders and deacons; and that they should meet together at stated times to consider certain matters which bear a more general character. And it is reasonable that in smaller churches the deacons should be added to the body of the elders to constitute the one and only consistory.

In the Netherlands they speak of the broader and smaller consistory — the smaller being the meeting of the elders, and the broader being the assembly to which the deacons are added. It seems to me that it is better for us to keep the terminology which is used in our churches by speaking of the elders' meeting, and of the deacons' meeting; and of the meeting of the consistory, — that is, the meeting of all the office-bearers in the local church. We might incorporate those terms in a revised Church Order. That would also take away the seeming discrepancy between Confession and Church Order mentioned above.

* * *

IN several of our churches our diaconates are hardly active in their

THE MINISTRY OF MERCY — Continued

office. To a great extent they limit their work to the management of the finances of the church, and to assisting the elders. Of course, those activities are commendable, provided that the real office of the deacons is not neglected. And it is very plain in Scripture, and in our Confession of Faith, our Church Order, and Forms for the installation of deacons, and the prayer before the meeting of the deacons (see our Psalter Hymnal) that the deacons are called to the priestly office of caring for the poor.

Alas! often the peculiar work of the deacons is not done. And this is very deplorable. It is bound to have a detrimental effect on the entire church if one of the three offices is slumbering, or worse, is lame. If one of the members of the body — say hand or foot — is not used, the whole body suffers. Christ has instituted the priestly office of the deacons just as well as the offices of prophet (Ministry of the Word) and of King (the Eldership). The ministry of mercy must be active just as well as the other ministries. In the ministry of mercy the Church received the organ by which the living sacrifices of love are brought. And if the church nearly exclusively cares for its material interests, there is danger that the church degenerates into something like a business corporation.

In our times of apostasy, in which the love of many is apt to wax cold, it is of the utmost importance that we exercise the ministry of mercy. The love of Christ must constrain us. When the Son of Man shall come in His glory (Matthew 25:31ff), He shall not praise us because we have built beautiful churches, and have been zealous in many so-called Kingdom causes. But, "the King shall say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry, and ye gave me to eat; I was thirsty and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me . . . Verily, I say unto you. Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me."

Should we not do all in our power to correct what is amiss in the conception several diaconates have of their office,

and to stimulate the activities of the diaconates?

* * *

It does not benefit much that Synods deliver pronouncements in regard to the office of the deacons. Even Classis, which is so much closer to the local church with its office bearers, seemingly does not bring much of a change for the better, though Article 41 of the Church Order prescribes that Classis must investigate about this office, and though the church visitors are supposed to do the same. We got into a deep rut and special efforts must be made to pull us out. Even the reading of the Form, which is so Scriptural and states so plainly what the calling of the deacons is, seems to make little impression on many congregations and deacons. We just keep on following the old tradition, and become callous to the admonitions of Holy Scripture.

What, then, should be done?

In the first place our people should be instructed about the significance of the various offices, and especially about the ministry of mercy. It should be understood that it means so much to be called by the Church of Christ, and hence by God Himself, to serve as "representatives of Christ's loving care," as it is stated in our Form. The ministers of the Word have a great task in this respect as well on the pulpit as in the Catechism room.

It is the more necessary thus to enlighten the congregation because in general the American churches do not understand what the character is of the special offices in the Church. They speak of a Church Board which manages the affairs of the church, like a Board of a society takes care of its business. The superintendent of the Sunday School, or the leader of the Christian Endeavor, or the unordained worker and preacher in mission or evangelization, are considered to be just as well in office as deacon or elder or minister of the Gospel. Besides, most American churches have no deacons who are called to the ministry of mercy. In most churches no offerings are taken for the needy. It is left to all kinds of agencies within the church, like Sunday Schools and Ladies' Aids, or, outside of the church, the Salvation Army, the Red Cross etc., to help the

poor in their distress. And the State becomes more and more the benevolent party which takes care of its citizens from the cradle to the grave.

Considering all this, it is certainly necessary that our people learn to know more about the character of the offices in the church and especially about the diaconate.

But more needs to be done. The diaconate should be brought out of its isolation. We cannot expect much change for the better as long as this is not done.

The diaconates of the various churches need each other. They must organize conferences where they can discuss the various problems pertaining to their office. Life nowadays is very complex. Many questions arise. We must take note of the changes in the economic and social life. Conditions are so different from those half a century or more ago. But there is just as much and even more suffering and misery than in bygone days. And this world becomes more and more one. We hear the cries of our brethren and sisters in other countries, who suffer for the name and the sake of Christ Jesus. And there are our fellowmen in distant lands, and even in our country, who go hungry and lack the necessities of life. "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now," not the least while the world is bleeding from many wounds.

In view of all this it is necessary that our diaconates counsel with each other.

Now this can best be done in conferences where they can discuss their problems, and where they can enlighten each other.

We should have these conferences not only in the centra, but *all* our diaconates should take part through their delegates. If our Federations of young men and women, and of men, can have their sectional meetings and their annual gatherings, why should not our diaconates find a way to have their sectional and general conferences? The financial expense involved would be a very good investment, and will prove to be great gain for the ministry of mercy.

Our Classes might take the initiative and advise our diaconates to organize conferences. And they might also give leadership through the ministry of the Word.

In the *Gereformeerde Kerken* in the Netherlands, the conferences of deacons have been of great benefit to the development of the diaconates. We might turn much of them and from their origin, *Het Diaconale Correspondentieblad*.

Thus far our diaconates have no opportunity to meet with ministers and elders in Classis or Synod. Matters pertaining to their office, if brought to the attention of Classis or Synod, are discussed and decided by the delegates of those assemblies who are ministers and elders, or in exceptional cases deacons who are delegated as assistant elders. The deacons as such have no voice or vote in these assemblies.

In recent years many in the *Gereformeerde Kerken* in the Netherlands were of the opinion that the deacons also should be delegates to the major assemblies, in order that proper attention might be given to benevolent causes, and that the various diaconates might be better able to cooperate. The last General Synod, meeting at The Hague, 1949, decided that the Classis may let consistories delegate to their meetings a deacon, besides a minister of the Gospel and an elder, when diaconal matters are to be considered. The deacon delegates shall then have a decisive vote in that which pertains to their office. As far as we know this is the

first time that a Synod took the stand that deacons could be delegated to a major assembly, be it with limited authority.

The Synod of the Hague also appointed a Committee to study the place of the deacons in the ecclesiastical assemblies (Consistory, Classis, Synod). This Committee was instructed to consult the sister churches, to which our Christian Reformed Church in America belongs. We are grateful that this subject is brought to our attention, and we hope that this study will tend to the reformation and development of our diaconates.

Protestant-Roman Catholic Tensions in the United States

by HARRY R. BOER

THE unpredictable President of the United States precipitated as pretty Protestant-Roman Catholic controversy recently as this country has seen many a year. The presidential action of October 20, appointing General Clark W. Clark to be ambassador to the Vatican, offended a great many people and surprised everybody. Neither Protestant nor Catholic leaders had any inkling of what was coming. The Vatican was hardly prepared for the announcement. Senator Connally, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee was, as one magazine put it, "fit to be tied." Protestant leaders met and issued weighty pronouncements. The religious and secular press contributed news and views. The politicians probed deeply for motives, the Spanish clergy were alarmed, *Pravda* saw espionage. It is hard not to be impressed with Mr. Truman's sense of balance and capacity for measured action.

What's Behind It?

PERHAPS it is not a very fruitful exercise to inquire at too great length into why the President did what he did. It has been suggested that he wanted to put Senators McCarran and McCarthy on the spot in the 1952 elections for opposing the nomination of Philip Jessup to the U. N. Another guess is that he believes the Democrats

will in general benefit by his action in the coming elections. Still another is that the President was irked by a recent report from Rome by Congressman Franklin D. Roosevelt Jr. stating he had assured the Pope that an ambassador would be named before long, but that Mr. Truman could not be expected to have nerve enough to make the appointment before the elections of 1952 had taken place. These guesses may or may not be true. The fact is that the President has given a reason for the appointment and on basis of that reason the issue will have to be hammered out. This reason is, in brief, that in the present critical world situation an ambassador at the Vatican will strengthen the anti-Communist world front.

I am not interested here to discuss the political and constitutional issues involved in the appointment of General Clark. What I should like to do at this time is to look at the issue from a point of view little touched on in all the heated debate, namely its symptomatic value as an indicator of basic Protestant-Roman Catholic relations in the United States. We touch on something portentous here. But before leaving the envoy question as such it will be helpful for our purpose to look for a moment at its historical background.

In 1848 an American charge d'affaires was accredited to the Papal

States with the commission to deal exclusively with civil and commercial matters. This appointment was terminated in 1868. At that time the Papal States comprised 16,000 square miles with a population of 3,000,000. Since then political developments in Italy have robbed the Roman Catholic Church well-nigh completely of its vast holdings as a temporal state. The extent of the present papal domains was fixed by the Lateran Agreement that was ratified by the Pope and the Italian Parliament in 1929. It gives the Pope sovereignty over an area of 108.7 acres which at the present time has a population of about 1000. This is the sovereign "State of Vatican City."

During World War II President Roosevelt sent Mr. Myron C. Taylor to the Vatican as "personal representative with the rank of ambassador" and President Truman retained him in that capacity for a period after the war. When the mission was allowed to lapse, Mr. Truman gave assurances to Protestant leaders that he would not again raise the issue while he was in office. The painful surprise in Protestant quarters caused by the President's action is therefore wholly understandable.

American representation at the Vatican in the full diplomatic sense of the word would not be a novel phenomenon on the international political hori-

PROTESTANT-ROMAN CATHOLIC TENSIONS

zon. At the present time thirty-seven nations, including all the great powers except the United States and the USSR, maintain official representatives at the Vatican and receive papal emissaries in turn. In view of this circumstance at least one Protestant argument adduced against the appointment of General Clark becomes a bit silly. *The Christian Century* urges that if the Pope is to be treated as a ruler of a foreign state American bishops and archbishops will have to be treated as foreign agents in view of their oath of loyalty to the Pope. It is passing strange that countries maintaining official relations with the Vatican have not seen the profound implication of their action.

Personally, I find it difficult to become very deeply upset about this whole question of American representation at the Vatican. I have no objection in principle to having America do what thirty-seven other nations (among which is the Netherlands) find it expedient to do. If England, whose royal Head of State is at the same time the titular head of the Anglican Church, can have official relations with the Vatican without apparent disadvantage to the Protestant community, the same could conceivably be true in America.

I would prefer to see the President's appointment rejected by the Senate. But that stems more from my dislike to see the prestige of the Roman Catholic hierarchy in America enhanced than from fundamental concern about danger to the principle of "the separation of Church and State." I have an idea that a similar motivation lies back of the "patriotic" protestations of a great deal of American Protestant leadership. I also have an idea that the Roman Catholic leadership shares these suspicions, and that American political leaders do, too. That is what places the supporters of the President's nomination in a strong position. They probably feel, not without reason, that they are opposed not so much by a really sincere concern for the maintaining of constitutional integrity as by a religious antipathy.

Swallowing the Camel

GNATS are pestiferous little fellows and everyone should feel sympa-

thetic with those who strain at a gnat. But the sympathy is difficult to retain when the strainer at the gnat swallows with gusto the camel. Great sections of American Protestantism have departed so far from the Reformation tradition and swallowed wholesale the religion of Humanism, that they have virtually lost the power of Christian witness. Compared to this fearful catastrophe in American religious life the appointment of an ambassador to the Vatican, for the prevention of which a verbal and political holy war has been declared, is trivial indeed. About all that is left of the Protestant tradition in large areas of religious life in our country is an appreciation of the political and religious freedom, and the liberation of society and the sciences from ecclesiastical domination, which Protestantism has so effectively helped to bring about.

But for the basic commitments and issues that set the Protestant off from the Catholic there is little concern — indeed, they are thought trivial, matters with which an enlightened age does not concern itself. The sovereignty of God's grace, the sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice, the relation between nature and grace, the priesthood of believers, the centrality of the Word, the spiritual nature of the Church — these are ignored or given a content wholly foreign to the understanding of Calvin and Luther. These leaders saw the true danger of Roman Catholicism and opposed it at those points where it subverted the Gospel of Christ.

There was little in common with the attitude of the Reformation to Rome in the recent anti-Vatican envoy sermon of Dr. Robert McCracken of New York's Riverside Church. Protested he: "... if the democratic way of life and if the principles of the Reformation are to be safeguarded there will have to be some plain speaking." Protestants must "view with alarm" the bid for power of the Roman Catholic church "because of the anti-democratic character of the Romanist system It has an astonishing hold over the machinery of American life — the press, the radio, the films, the whole field of public relations. It is constantly bringing its weight to bear on local, national and state officials. . . ." Dr. Ralph Sockman is concerned lest

a papal nuncio at Washington become dean of the diplomatic corps. Dr. G. Bromley Oxnam warns against "a state seeking political power and constant increase of property." One could extend the list of American liberal Protestant leaders who are almost frantically warning the country against the political dangers attending the appointment of an envoy to the Vatican.

The Protestant Vacuum

WHEN I see men and organizations which by their denial of or indifference to the true heritage of the Reformation create religious vacuums into which Roman Catholicism all too easily steps I am little moved to join them in their perverted opposition to Catholicism. The weapons of the Church's warfare are precisely *not* political and propagandistic. The blatant campaign of "Protestants and other Americans United for the Separation of Church and State" (the "other" Americans are presumably all secular and sectarian individuals who will help to boot the Catholics about) to "arouse public opinion and focus it upon the Senate" by means of "newspapers, radio, television, direct mailing and legal action if this becomes necessary", is so far from serving the true interests of Protestantism that it can only subvert and help further to destroy it.

If American Protestantism were true to the faith it inherited from the Reformation, it would not have to fear the pomp and pageantry, the influence and political connivance of the Catholic Church. These would simply be unable to materially affect a truly Protestant national community. But now Protestantism is becoming more and more interested in emulating Rome as an ecclesiastical organization, founded on an "ecumenical" basis. In this effort the form of godliness seems to figure far more largely than the *power* thereof. For this reason the need of keeping step with Rome becomes paramount and the loss of prestige threatened by an ambassadorship to the Vatican is entertained with horror. Liberal Protestantism in its opposition to the appointment of an envoy to the Vatican is showing itself to an alarming extent as a political power bloc organized for ends which, in the light of its attitude to the Gospel of Christ, have little

common with the true purposes of a Christian community.

Protestant Power Politics?

IN these ecclesiastical-political visions we see, I think, the real nature of a great deal of Protestant-Roman Catholic relations in America today. Some, true to its political and ecclesiastical genius, is marching on to its end of dominating the intellectual, religious, cultural and, ultimately, political, patterns of America life. With the accrued sagacity of centuries it presses on, slowly and inexorably at all times, automatically and effectively at the crucial moments. It is no small indication of the political power of Catholicism that, over the strong protest of the Protestant community, President Roosevelt felt constrained to send and President Truman to retain Mr. Taylor at the Vatican during a period of years. And now, after this mission seemed to have been terminated, the matter of the ambassadorship to the Vatican is more acutely before the American public than ever before.

That the danger of expanding Roman Catholic power in all domains of American life is real I am little disposed to dispute. It is a fact patent for all to see. The symbols of it lie in the public recognition that is from time to time and on various levels of eminence shown by the government or by officials in the government to the Roman Catholic power. Among these none is greater than the effort to have America officially represented at the Vatican. To neutralize or at least to contain this influence is the aim of much of organized Protestantism today. The tensions between these two forces are the essence of American Protestant and Roman Catholic relations is to be understood. But that a Protestantism, which has sold its birthright of Reformation Christianity for a mess of Humanism, can stop the ever oncoming colossus by means of power politics and propaganda, is among the least of my expectations. A politically naive and amateurish Protestantism is simply no match for the expertness of its opponent. It will be a match only when it can oppose Roman Catholic encroachment on every front by a theology, a teaching, a philosophy, a cultural vision that is true to the faith that was bequeathed to it.

Must Evangelicals Imitate Liberals?

THERE is, fortunately, more to American Protestantism than the liberal wing of it. There are substantial orthodox elements left in our country. One has the impression they are less anti-Catholic than the Liberals are. Two things must be said about the relations between this section of Protestantism and the Roman Catholics. In the first place, when it does oppose Rome on such an issue as the Vatican envoy question it tends to let the liberal strategy set the tone for its methods. The action of the NAE is a case in point. In an October 29 dispatch the *New York Times* reports: "Yesterday's wide denunciation of the President's action . . . was sponsored by the National Association of Evangelicals, which asked 8,000 churches to join the demonstration. Ministers in many of the churches spoke against the President's action and petitions were signed on the church steps. . . . The Association said that \$500,000 worth of radio time, paid for by laymen, had been used during the nation-wide protest."

The action of the National Association of Evangelicals seems to be characterized by all the frantic alarm of the Liberals, the same abuse of the pulpit, and the use of the church steps as a convenient trap for petition signing. Protestations from the side of orthodox Protestantism against the presidential action are in order, but can they not be made within a framework of dignity compatible with trust in God as the Ruler of the nations and in His Christ as Head of the Church?

In the second place, if orthodox Protestantism acts with a view to curtailing Roman Catholic influence only when its national prestige is in danger, nothing very lofty can be looked for in its action. When Rome's offensive in America is met only as it expresses itself in an overt action, a meeting of the threat in an improvised and immature manner is to be expected. The difference between the Catholic offensive and the Protestant counter-offensive is then this: the overt action expressive of the Roman Catholic advance is but part of a far larger plan and undertaking. Behind it lies a momentum, a strategy, an organization which, if foiled at one point can erupt at another and, in any case, stands ready at all times to capitalize on the

weaknesses and failures of the opposition. The Protestant counter-offensive on the other hand, is wholly determined by the Catholic strategy. It has no plan, no depth, no internal unity. The characteristic of such counter-offensives, whether in the military, political, ecclesiastical or any other area, is always improvisation, near panic, weakness. The long range outcome of a conflict conducted under such conditions is seldom in doubt.

I am not going to suggest that orthodox Protestantism should organize a plan-in-depth to stop the Catholic advance. At least not on the political and public relations levels at which a stand is now being attempted. It seems to me that no better beginning could be made to thwart Roman Catholic designs in America than by open discussion on all levels, both among ourselves and with Catholics, on the basic differences at issue between the two groups.

There is at the present time little such discussion. One wonders how many of the pulpits which at the invitation of the NAE fulminated against the President's appointment ever intelligently set forth the doctrines that distinctively set Protestantism off from Roman Catholicism. How much space is devoted in our magazines to an analysis of the development of Roman Catholicism and Protestantism in America and the implications of this for the present situation. How much basic discussion is there on the theological level? The regrettable fact is that Roman Catholics and Protestants are now living in almost complete isolation from one another's thought. No more fruitful situation is conceivable for the fostering of mutual suspicions and the creation of misunderstanding.

Until Protestantism learns to study and analyze Catholicism in its basic character, its opposition to Roman Catholic advance will bear little fruit other than to effect a further distancing of the two groups from each other. This is certain—a Protestantism weakened by Liberalism on the one hand and by a theologically uncritical Orthodoxy on the other, will never provide a long term successful barrier to Catholicism in America. If the vehemently protesting Protestantism would take calm counsel in terms of this thought a large measure of security for the Protestant tradition might still be provided.

From Which End Must the END Be Viewed?

by JAMES DAANE

EVERY Christian believes that the world will come to an End. This is not remarkable since it is the plain teaching of the Bible. But what is remarkable is the fact that nowadays many non-Christians *also* believe that the world is coming to an end. Yet the belief of the Christian and the non-Christian on this score are by no means identical. For although both believe in a coming End, they do not define the End in the same way. How differently they conceive of the End is indicated by the fact that the Christian looks for the End with hope and prayer, while the non-Christian views the End with a sense of fear and dread.

The reason for this difference is that the Christian interprets the End in terms of the times of Jesus Christ, and the unbeliever in terms of his own times.

Our times are so troubled that they demand attention. The non-Christian reflects on these troubled times. He sees trouble seething in East and West. He recalls that until his generation the world never saw a world war, and he cannot forget that his own generation has already seen two, with the world's worst economic depression sandwiched in between. He now owns the atomic bomb; he sees nothing to prevent an atomic war. He feels uneasy about a possible atomic chain-reaction that might blow the whole world into bits, leaving only the stars below as a place on which the atomic dust could settle. He knows of a new and hostile philosophy marching through the world, without a philosophy of his own with which to counter it. Over the whole of his individual and collective life he senses an ominous threat of the End, threatening everything he holds dear.

This belief that the Sign of the End hangs over the whole of existence is indeed a proper belief. The Apostle Paul has claimed no less. Yet, unlike Paul, the non-believer does not greet the End with hope and prayer. On the contrary, he regards it with a shrinking dread. He is not filled with a blessed hope, but with a wretched de-

spair, for his conception of the End is akin to death.

This difference in mood lies in the fact that the non-Christian derives his idea of the End, and his definition of it, from the destructivistic and nihilistic nature of history of his own times. His conception of the End, accordingly, is in terms of Nothingness; it is merely a final calendral end-date, beyond which there is nothing. He is, consequently, filled with a despairing dread, for despairing dread is the mood that corresponds to Nothingness. Modern Existentialism is the philosophic expression of this conception of the End. The difference between the mood of Existentialism and the blessed hope of the Christian Faith indicates the profound difference between the non-Christian and Christian conception of the End.

The non-Christian is right in believing that he sees the Sign of the End hovering threateningly over all human life. Yet this insight is devoid of all Christian content. It lacks all Christian content because it is not related to Jesus Christ. It is void of anything specifically Christian because it is a definition of the End grounded in the troubled history of his own times, and not grounded in that time of Jesus Christ indicated by B.C. and A.D. Paul's conception of the End is totally different just because it is grounded in those only truly decisive times: the earthly, historical times of Jesus Christ. Paul understood that these times, and not any other times or seasons in the temporal process, determine the Nature of the End.

THE non-Christian of today senses that the history of this world is being set at nought, that it is being reduced to zero. This too is biblical truth. The Bible declares plainly that God is setting the wisdom and power and kings of this world at nought (I Corinthians). Yet in this instance, too, the truth which the non-Christian senses remains void of all Christian content. And the reason is the same. He gathers his glimmer of truth, not

from the Bible, but from his own troubled times. From the troubled nature of his history, he concludes that history is being set at nought — and it is in terms of this nought that he defines the End as a large historic Zero. He fails to reach Christian truth because he gathers his awareness that history is being set at nought from the broken reflections of this truth given through history in general, instead of from that point in history where it stands clearly revealed: the days of Jesus Christ.

What he does not understand, because he keeps his eyes riveted on his own times, is that God in principle has already set this world and its history at nought, when He set Christ at nought on the Cross. When Christ was set at nought on the Cross, He was crucified unto the world and the world unto Him. Here in the deep theological sense is the end of the world. What God is doing to sinful men and that sinful history which rejects Christ is essentially the same as what He did at the Cross to Christ: He is setting them and their history at nought. Then a gloomy End as conceived by the non-Christian is already in its greatest dimension given in that once-for-all event, the Cross. The non-Christian senses the "gloom" and the "End," but because he derives it from his instead of Christ's times, he associates the End *directly* with a final calendral date, instead of *directly* with the Cross and then *indirectly* with the end of the world. Consequently, although he rightly senses that the world is being set at nought, he does not associate this insight with Christ, and his conception of the End loses all Christian content.

Because he reads his idea of the End merely from the nature of his own times, the non-Christian does not know that when God set the world at nought in Christ, God did it *in order that the world through Christ might be saved*. He does not know that Christ, and the world in Christ, was set at nought and reduced to nothing, precisely that it might be raised in the Resurrection to the highest glory. From his own times

obtains a broken reflection of the a of the Cross, but he obtains no a of the Resurrection. Hence the a-Christian's idea of the End is cast terms of the Cross, but without bene- of the modifying idea of the Resur- tion.

The non-Christian only learns part the lesson, the part that Friedrich etzsche learned: if man and his his- y is unwilling to be set at nought h Christ at the Cross by being cruci- d together with Him, he and his his- y will nonetheless be set at nought the End, an End which is akin to the thingness he so much dreads.

The Christian has learned from his ole that the End must be understood terms of the times of Christ. He ows that if he gathers his conception the End from his own times, he will ess like the non-Christian a concep- n of the End in mere calendar terms, finis, a point defined in terms of thing. Reading all things in terms "under the sun," he will arrive at t thought expressed by Solomon t the same lot befalls the wicked and ighteous. To say that in the end ything turns out the same, is exact- equivalent to saying that history adds to nothing.

The Christian views the End not first all in terms of a final calendral date, in the light of the Cross and Resur- tion. He knows that Christ as the icified and Risen One determines times, and is Himself "the begin- g and the end." At the Cross he s the End of sin and death, the End he "old." But this End is not equi-

valent to a mere *end*, a point beyond which there is nothing. It is followed by a new beginning, by the Resurrec- tion which does not annihilate, but re- news the old.

The Christian, therefore, views the End in terms of the Cross and the Resurrection to which it answers. The End is given in Jesus Christ as the Crucified and Risen One. Since Christ has already come, he knows that the end of the ages is already upon him. And since he glories in both the Cross and the Resurrection, he awaits the End with an assured hope and a fervent prayer. "Come, Lord Jesus, Come, quickly."

THE claim that the End must be defined in terms of the time of Christ, instead of in terms of a mere final date, either because of the nihilistic nature of our history, or because time is finite and must sometime come to an end, does not mean that the world will not come to an end that can be dated. Without such a date the Christian Faith would be lost in a general timelessness; for it is precisely the content of the Christian hope that it shall be delivered from the sinful, temporal historical processes. It is because the Christian conception of the End is rooted in a concrete historical center, and not in considerations of "destructive history" or "temporal finitude," that the Christian knows the final End will also be a concrete historical event that can be dated. It is this that gives his hope, assurance. But the claim that the End must be de-

fined in terms of Christ, and with only secondary reference to the nihilistic character of history, and the finite character of time, since Christ is Lord over both, must be emphasized if the concept of the End is not to lose all Christian content.

IT would seem that the thesis of this article is so simple and clear that its claim would not need to be pressed. Yet the fact cannot be denied that both in theology and in Christian piety the End of the world has to a large degree been thought of first in terms of a final end-date, and only in the second place, and in limited degree, in terms of the time of Christ's life; whereas, the reverse order is the biblical one. In the Bible, the whole doctrine of the "last things" has reference *first of all* to Christ, and only after this to all of time and history. And it is the priority of the Christ-reference that pulls the Sign of the End over *all* subsequent time and history.

It is the reversal of this biblical order that has more than any other one thing deprived eschatology of a fuller development and its rightful place in Christian theology and piety, and thereby deprived other Christian doctrines of the contribution that eschatology alone can make to them.

In a following article consideration will be given to the fact that eschatology has been too greatly separated from Christ and His times, and too restrictively localized in that period that immediately precedes the end of the world.

LETTER TO THE EDITORS

Concerning "Formal Discipline in Our Schools"

DEAR EDITORS:

I am enclosing my renewal subscrip- to your excellent *Reformed Jour- nal*. This month's articles are tops, as al. I especially liked the discus- sions of race relations and divorce.

Professor Zylstra's article ["Formal Discipline in Our Schools," November 1] falls in my own field, and I wld like to make a few comments on It contains numerous thoughts ch seem to me to be sound and ely. I regret, however, that its main

thrust is confusing to the thoughtful reader, and that it appears to give aid and comfort to those who oppose change and improvement in education- al practice. Perhaps you will be will- ing to convey to him these reactions of a sympathetic reader to his article.

I call attention, first of all, to the ap- parent contradiction between Professor Zylstra's point 6, under *Causes*, which reads, "The encroachment upon educa- tional methods in all fields of the dog- ma of 'scientific method,'" and his

point 1-g. under *Towards Solution*: in "English," which reads, in part, "Satis- faction with nothing less than . . . ap- plication of the science of grammar." In the one instance he disparages the scientific method in education, and in the other he demands the application of the science of grammar.

I suppose we are faced here with what the semanticists call "shifts of meaning." In the one instance he uses the term *scientific method* in the sense of induction or systematic observation,

"FORMAL DISCIPLINE IN OUR SCHOOLS" — Continued

and in the other, in the sense of a body of principles which possess an internal logic. Modern linguists think of the science of grammar in the inductive sense. The work of Curme, Poutsma, Kruisinga, Jespersen, Pooley, Leonard, Fries and the authors of the great unabridged dictionaries is based upon the descriptive as opposed to the normative conception of grammar. There is no other way of accounting for the changes that have occurred in English grammar from the days of the *Beowulf* to the present. Grammar in the sense of a body of *a priori* principles would be analogous to theology, which, in the orthodox position, is a body of theory based on revealed principles. One school of Greek grammarians, the "analogs," believed that each word and each inflection and syntactical construction, possesses an inherent meaning which dictates the standards of expression. There is a kind of "intellectual discipline" which insists upon the validity of the observed facts of language in the place of stereotypes which have existence only in the minds of some pedagogues and 17th Century grammarians.

The illiteracies which Professor Zylstra cites in a student paper are, of course, deplorable, and are in violation of all standards, whether normative or descriptive. I am sure the professor would not wish to make a generaliza-

tion on the basis of this case, although in the minds of casual readers he would seem to be undertaking to do so. I could cite similar Jeremiads about student writing from reports of hundreds of years ago and from superintendent's reports of one hundred and of fifty years ago. Here is one from George Fox (1660 A. D.): "Do not they speake false English, false Latine, false Greek . . . and false to the other tongues. . . that doth not speak *thou* to *one*, whatever he be, Father, Mother, King, or Judge; is he not a novice and unmannerly, and an Idiot and a Fool, that speaks *You* to *one*, which is not to be spoken to a *singular*, BUT TO MANY? O Vulgar Professors and Teachers, that speaks plural when they should *Singular* . . . Come you Priests and Professors, have you not learnt your Accidence?"

Professor Zylstra insists that speaking and writing can be improved by means of the teaching of formal grammar. All the evidence is against him. This evidence has been summarized in many places, but I will be forgiven if I cite the summary in the recent book by DeBoer, Kaulfers, and Miller (Mc Graw-Hill, 1951), Chapters 3 and 4 (probably in the Calvin Library). In any case, Professor Zylstra offers no evidence for his own position other than his own vigorous assertion. The young man who was illiterate in spite

of his twelve years of English probably had grammar from the fourth grade on, but Professor Zylstra prescribes more of the same futile medicine.

Professor Zylstra's case is based upon his theory of formal discipline, which the psychological laboratories have discredited for more than fifty years. He should be prepared to show that the experimentation with this problem has all been in error, and that he has facts which contradict the findings of the psychologists, or assert that he is unimpressed by facts when he has revealed principles which supersede the facts of observation by finite creatures.

God has revealed Himself in nature as well as in grace, and the way to study Him in nature is with the God-given intelligence and sensory equipment which is needed for scientific observation. Language is a part of nature as well as of grace, and I should be grateful to Professor Zylstra if he would document his generalizations with some facts of nature.

I appreciate his writing on this subject, and the fact that the *Reformed Journal* is interested in education. I hope more articles will appear on this subject.

With all good wishes,

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Mr. Smith, Mr. Jones, The Church and the Bible

by GEORGE STOO

IT is now in order to examine the decisions of the Synod of 1947 on Divorce and Remarriage, and the protest of Mr. Peter L. Van Dyken against them.

I do so by reference to the report and recommendations of the Committee which reported to the Synod of 1951, and which that Synod commended to our churches for study. This report, together with Mr. Van Dyken's protest, may be found on pages 398 to 418 of the *Acts* of 1951.

The Study Committee comes to the

conclusion "that the protest of brother Van Dyken should in the main be sustained." And the Committee recommends that the whole position of the Synod of 1947 on divorce and remarriage be rescinded.

One member of the Committee is unable to go all the way with the Majority of the Committee, and has submitted a Minority report and recommendation. The differences between the Majority and this Minority will be pointed out in due order.

The Majority of the Study Commit-

tee analyzes the position of 1947, and finds in it three distinct propositions. For the sake of clarity and concreteness I shall set them down, and the arguments by which they are defended and rejected, in terms of cases involving people standing before the Church and the Word of God. This is quite proper for these decisions do, after all, concern people — sinners with eternal souls to be saved or lost, and in need of the ministry of the Church which Christ established for the salvation of men.

Mr. Smith, The Church, and The Bible

THIS concerns what the Majority calls the "First Proposition of 1947." Mr. Smith, a member of the Christian Reformed Church, was divorced on grounds of mental cruelty. That was an unbiblical divorce, since our Lord condemns any divorce obtained on any ground other than fornication.

To make matters worse, Mr. Smith remarried. He now stands in the judgment of the Church as having committed a double sin. What is still worse, his second sin is not just a single act but a continuing one. The second marriage is held to be a *living in continuous adultery*. Mr. Smith, therefore, comes under the special care and discipline of the Church.

By the grace of God, and through the ministry of the Church, Mr. Smith comes aware of his sin. Having repented, he makes confession of his sins before the Consistory, and seeks to be restored as a member in good standing.

The Church, on the basis of the Proposition of 1947, says: "Certainly, whoever confesses and repents of his sin may be restored. The big question now is: Do you really repent? It is not enough to say you do. It is not enough to show that you live what seems to be a holy life in your present marriage. The simple fact is that you do not give proof of sincere repentance *unless* you dissolve your present marriage and return to your first wife."

Mr. Smith replies: "It is quite impossible for me to return to my first wife, because she is now married to another. Therefore, to show repentance that way is out of the question."

"In that case," says the Church, on the ground of 1947, "you must leave your present wife anyhow and live with her no longer."

"But we have three children together," pleads Mr. Smith. "Do you mean that I must break up my home, let my children adrift, and let them grow without a father, or else without a mother? Does the Word of God require that I do that on penalty of being barred from the Church of Christ?"

The Christian Reformed Church answers: "That is indeed what the Word of God requires. If you do not repent, you cannot be a member of Christ's

Church. And whether you have three children or none, the simple fact is this: that if you do not leave your wife and break up your home, you do not show sincere repentance. For your present marriage is one of continuous adultery. And obviously, you don't repent of sin if you continue to live in it."

Now that is a hard answer, a very hard answer. But the Word of God often confronts us with demands that are hard to our selfish and sinful hearts. So we should not be too concerned if the demand is hard. Our only concern must be: *Is this the demand of the Word of God?*

The Synod of 1947 says it is. Let us see, then, what proof from the Bible the Synod of 1947 offers.

Romans 7:1-3

THIS passage, as quoted by the Synod of 1947, reads: "The woman that hath a husband is bound by law to the husband while he liveth; but if the husband dies she is discharged from the law of her husband. So then, if, while the husband liveth, she be joined to another man, she shall be called an adulteress . . ."

Of course, what holds for the woman holds also for a man in the same case. So it is natural to ask: What does this mean as applied to Mr. Smith? In its exegesis of the above passage, the Synod of 1947 answers substantially as follows:

Romans 7:1-3 makes it clear that Mr. Smith, even though legally married, is living in adultery. Why? Because his first wife is still living, and he is still bound to her. He is not freed from her unless she dies.

And Mr. Smith committed adultery not only by *entering* into that second marriage, but is continually committing adultery by *remaining* in that relationship.

Therefore, if Mr. Smith is to be received as a member of the Church, he must stop committing adultery by returning to his first wife. If he cannot return, he must at least cease living with his present wife.

That is the interpretation and application of Romans 7:1-3, made by the Synod of 1947.

The Majority of the Study Committee examines this proof and finds it wanting.

The argument of the Majority is that Romans 7:1-3 does not express itself on any matter of divorce or remarriage after divorce. Therefore it cannot be used to sustain the "First proposition of 1947." It is no proof for the hard answer given to Mr. Smith.

Why? Observe the following:

1) In Romans 7, Paul uses marriage to illustrate the believer's relation to the law. For purposes of illustration he uses only the normal marriage — one that is dissolved by death. Naturally. The exceptions to the normal marriage do not come within Paul's purview here. If he should introduce the abnormal situations here, his illustration would hopelessly obscure and confuse his argument instead of clarifying it. In other words, Paul is not speaking here of the case of Mr. Smith, and what he says here cannot be used as Scriptural evidence against him.

2) It is significant that a sixty-five page report on divorce and remarriage, drawn up by leading scholars of the Gereformeerde Kerken in the Netherlands, and submitted to the Synod of Utrecht in 1923, *does not contain a single reference to Romans 7:1-3!* Why not? Presumably because this passage has no bearing on the question of divorce and remarriage after divorce. It does not, in fact, have such bearing. For the case at hand it is irrelevant.

The Majority is quite right. On the score of marriage, Rom. 7:1-3 teaches one, and only one, thing. It teaches that a married woman may not just get up and marry another man. If she did, she would be an adulteress, a bigamist. Of course, if her husband dies, that is another matter. In that case she is free to marry another, and not one will charge her with sin.

That teaching of Romans 7:1-3 is perfectly plain, and universally accepted. Even the non-Christian State accepts it and rules accordingly. A bigamist — a woman who, while married to a husband, marries still another — is punished. Everybody agrees to that. That's why Paul finds this illustration so appropriate. He cites a universally accepted principle to illustrate a spiritual truth.

But what of the person who is divorced and remarried? Paul says *nothing* about that here. And to read a

MR. SMITH, MR. JONES — Continued

judgment against the divorced and remarried out of Romans 7:1-3, the Synod of 1947, by a faulty exegesis, must first read into that passage *what is not there*.

The Synod of 1947 also *reads into* Romans 7:1-3 *what is not there* when it says: "Only the death of her (first) husband makes her free to marry another" (Acts 1947, p. 67). Romans 7:1-3 simply does not say that. The word "ONLY" is an importation. It is contrary to Romans 7. It is contrary to Matthew 5:32 and Matthew 19:9. It is contrary to the Church's own position that a woman is freed from her husband by his adultery.

It is unfortunate that, in order to prove its position, the Synod of 1947 should have advanced an argument so inconsistent with Scripture, and so inconsistent with its own belief.

I Corinthians 7:39

THIS is the second Scripture passage set forth by the Synod of 1947 in support of the Church's case against Mr. Smith, or, in support of the "First Proposition of 1947."

It reads: "A wife is bound for so long a time as her husband liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is free to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord."

On the admission of the Synod of 1947, I Cor. 7:39 says the same thing as does Romans 7:1-3. Only, it says that same thing in a different way — by direct teaching instead of by way of illustration.

The Majority agrees. But here, too, Paul is speaking only of the normal marriage relationship. He does not touch upon the problem of the divorced and remarried, anymore than he touches upon the situation of a woman freed by the fornication of her husband. Therefore, all that has been said in refutation of the "proof" of Romans 7:1-3, holds against the "proof" of I Cor. 7:39. Mr. Van Dyken seems to have felt the same way, since in his protest he doesn't trouble to comment on I Cor. 7:39.

Proverbs 28:13

THIS passage reads: "He that covereth his transgressions shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and for-

saketh them shall obtain mercy."

This proves, says the Synod of 1947, that Mr. Smith must not only *confess* his sin of divorce and remarriage. He must also *forsake* the sin of his second marriage — by leaving his second wife.

It proves nothing of the sort, UNLESS the second marriage of Mr. Smith is a continuous living in adultery. To be sure, the Synod of 1947 assumes that it is. It declares that when a marriage is begun in adultery, the continuance of that marriage is a *continuous* living in adultery. But there is no ground whatsoever for that assumption in Romans 7:1-3 or in I Cor. 7:39. The Majority calls this the "unproved and unprovable hypothesis of continuous adultery" (Acts 1951, p. 405). And the Minority member, the Rev. William P. Brink, deplors "the fact that stronger exegetical proof for the thesis of 'continuous adultery' was not given" (Acts 1951, p. 417).

Prov. 28:13 is what might be called a dependent Scriptural proof. Its relevance depends upon Scripture proof for the "hypothesis of continuous adultery." No Synod, including 1947, has given such proof. The hypothesis of continuous adultery continues to be only hypothesis. And Prov. 28:13 falls as proof in this case, because it depends on what has not been proved.

Therefore, Prov. 28:13 is worthless as proof that Mr. Smith must "cease living in the ordinary marriage relationship" with his second wife.

Other "Proofs"

THE Synod of 1947 adds a fourth ground: "This position [that Mr. Smith must leave his second wife and return to his first wife — S.] is in accordance with the official pronouncement of every orthodox denomination in our country which has drawn up resolutions anent this question. Unless, by solid arguments, those who disagree with it can prove that it is incorrect, the church should cling to it both in theory and in practice. For additional grounds see point 3" (Acts 1947, p. 67). ("Point 3" deals with the exception for those who were divorced and remarried while unenlightened.)

Concerning this, the Majority says

only: "This is not a ground but an unsupported assertion."

It may be added that the reference to "additional grounds" under "point 3" is meaningless. "Point 3" contains no additional grounds for proving that Mr. Smith must leave his second wife.

Mr. Jones, The Church, and The Bible

THIS concerns what the Majority calls the "Second Proposition of 1947."

Mr. Jones, a member of the Christian Reformed Church, committed adultery. His wife divorced him, and later married another. Mr. Jones also married again.

Mr. Jones repented of his sin of adultery, and lived a consecrated life in his second marriage. He asked to be restored to the membership of the Church.

Now the Church, on the basis of the position of 1947, would normally require that he return to his first wife. But since his first wife was both divorced and remarried with the sanction of the Church, the Church recognized that this is impossible. Therefore it demands of him only that he manifest genuine repentance "by means of ceasing to live in the ordinary marriage relationship with his present spouse" (Acts 1947, p. 66).

But suppose the first Mrs. Jones had not remarried? The Church's procedure, on the position of 1947, would then have been as follows:

"Mr. Jones," says the Church, "you must manifest genuine repentance by breaking your present marriage and by returning to your first wife."

Mr. Jones is tongue-tied with amazement. When he recovers, he answers: "How can you ask that? I sinned grievously against her when I committed adultery. After that our marriage was essentially broken, since my wife could not live with me again. Then, with the sanction of the Church she obtained a divorce, and our marriage was finally and legally broken. And after that I married again, by reason of which, it would seem, my first marriage was thrice broken. You certainly don't expect my first wife to take me back after all that?"

"It is true," replies the Church, "that she is not bound to take you

ack. After all, your adultery did free
r. But perhaps, now that you are a
anged man, she might be moved by
great spirit of Christian charity to
ke you back."

"It's impossible," cries Mr. Jones.
impossible, I tell you. In any event,
is impossible for me to even think of
king her. I know that I have abso-
tely no right, after all that has hap-
pened, to impose myself on her again."

"In that case," the Church answers.
ince it is impossible to return to your
st wife, you must nonetheless cease
live with your present wife."

"But why?" asks Mr. Jones. "Isn't
y present marriage a valid and
oper marriage?"

"Indeed not!" says the Church.
Our present marriage is a living in
ntinuous adultery."

"But how can you say so? My first
ife and I were legally divorced.
nce then I have been legally remar-
ed. How can my present marriage
e called continuous adultery?"

"Well," the Church answers, "you
are still bound to your first wife. Your
adultery freed her, but it did not free
you. Being still bound to her, before
God, you had no right to remarry.
You are still, before God, the husband
of your first wife. Therefore, your
present marriage is essentially bigamy,
and you are living in continuous ad-
ultery."

"Let me think this through," says
Mr. Jones. "My first wife was freed
from me because of my adultery. After
that she became married to another,
and the Church looks upon her second
marriage as valid and proper. *And
yet, I am still bound to her, though she
was freed from me and became bound
to another. And I am so much bound
to her that I am living in continuous
adultery when I marry another.* That
is a strange teaching indeed. But if
that is what the Bible teaches. I shall
have to believe it. Does the Bible teach
that? Can you prove it to me from
the Scriptures?"

The Church does not prove it and
cannot prove it!

There is good reason for the state-
ment of the Majority with reference to
this "Second Proposition of 1947,"
that: "Here we have the unproved and
unprovable hypothesis of continuous
adultery reduced to utter absurdity."

It has been the burden of this article
to show, by reference to the Majority
report, that no valid Scripture proof
has been adduced for the first and sec-
ond propositions ("Point 2 — 1947")
of the decisions of the Synod of 1947.

There is, however, as the Majority
(and in part the Minority) shows,
Scripture proof *against* these decisions
of 1947. I shall set these forth in an-
other article; and thereafter examine
the "Third Proposition of 1947"
("Point 3 — 1947"), which deals with
those who have committed the sins of
divorce and remarriage while in a state
of ignorance concerning the Word of
God.

Tradition and the Church

by HENRY STOB

I met a lady the other day who
ld me she was a Daughter of the
merican Revolution. One of her an-
stors, she said, had fought at Bunker
ill and had wintered with Washing-
n at Valley Forge.

I distinctly remember her words, but
was not these that impressed me at
e time: it was her manner. She spoke
ith feeling and animation, and with
onsiderable pride. She wasn't arro-
ant. She did not boast or patronize.
he merely reported. But it was plain
at the thing she reported made a dif-
ference in her life. When she spoke
f it she held her head erect. It seemed
o give her strength, and poise, and
esence.

I thought about this as I drove home,
nd wondered whether a sense of the
ast and of one's rootage in it always
ade a difference of this kind. I con-
uded that it did.

It is from the past, I reflected, that
e get important knowledge about our-
elves. From it we discover something

of our identity and meaning. It was
by consulting the past that the lady of
my acquaintance discovered her line-
age. She thereby found her place in
the succession of generations; she
thereby located, identified herself. And
in and with that identification she ac-
quired meaning. It is true that the
identification was made in narrow
genealogical rather than in broad his-
torical terms, but at least an identifica-
tion was made, and that for her was
gain. She had found her "place."

But more than that, she had entered
into an association. You could tell:
she knew she "belonged." She be-
longed to something bigger and more
important than herself. She belonged
to a Family. She had identified her-
self with a Group, and in thus tran-
scending her own individuality she had
grown in significance. This happens
whenever an individual reaches back
into the past and appropriates a tradi-
tion. He becomes a member of an his-
torical community whose larger life in-
creases his stature. He finds his con-

text. He takes his place in an environ-
ing Whole, by which he is defined, sus-
tained, and disciplined. He enters into
a fellowship that strengthens and in-
spires.

THE Jew is a case in point. In-
to him as into few others the Past has
entered as a defining element. And it
has made him formidable.

The Jew finds his roots not in a
family merely, but in a race. The pride
of race is strong in him, and the
strength of race has gone into him. This
is why he has been able to stand up
under the fearful bludgeonings of the
last two thousand years. He has been
ghettoed, beaten, and burned, but he
has not died. This is because in the
critical hour he has been able to re-
mind himself that he is Abraham's
child and of the prophets' lineage.

In many countries, particularly those
of Eastern Europe, the Jew does not
"belong": he is without rank or privi-

TRADITION AND THE CHURCH — Continued

lege. But, of course, he does "belong": he belongs to his own. And he is not only supported, he is constituted, by that to which he belongs. He is a Jew by virtue of it. What makes him what he is is his anchorage in the past, his rootage in his tradition, his oneness with his fathers. This gives him identity. This gives him meaning and significance. This makes him a person to be reckoned with.

IF we are to be strong we must do what the Jew does, and what the lady did of whom I spoke: we must find our context and take our place within it; we must discover and appropriate our past; we must establish ourselves in our tradition.

Everything depends, of course, on what we regard as our context, our past, our tradition. If we conceive these narrowly, we will not expand; if we fail to understand ourselves, we will conceive these narrowly.

We conceive our past too narrowly when, like the lady I mentioned, we restrict it to a family. There is no harm in tracing one's pedigree, and it may have its advantages, but we are a great deal more than members of a clan, and we will never find our whole self by looking into our ancestry. It is not family history that constitutes and defines us. We are more than Vandermas and Murphys, and we need more to feed on than genealogies.

The Jew knows that. He doesn't pride himself on being a Finkelstein; he prides himself on being a Jew. It is not a family he roots in; it is a race. And he is stronger for it. But even he is narrow, for a man is more than a member of a race or nation. It is not as a Hollander or as a Pole, nor as a Caucasian, Negro, or Jew that a man is ultimately significant.

I am far from disparaging either race or state. You are an American. America produced you. Its ideals inspire you, its institutions form you, its fortunes affect you. Without the whole context which is America, without the tradition which is America, you would not be the man you are. But yet — the term "American" does not define you. You are more than an American, just as you are more than a Vanderma-

You are a Christian. That is your name. It defines you.

TO be a Christian means to belong to a Group, to be a member of a Community. The name of that group is Church, the community of believers.

I know; the Christian has two dimensions. He moves on a vertical as well as a horizontal plane, and the vertical is first. In that reference he is pointed to heaven and the supernatural. In view of it he is defined as a man in touch with God. But he also moves on the horizontal plane, and in this reference he embraces the historical. In view of it he holds communion with a people recruited from all times and places. To be a Christian is to be in fellowship with God; but also, it is to be in fellowship with those in every age who have fellowship with God; it is to be in relation to that vast fraternity, the Church.

The Church, then, is the historical context in which we Christians stand. It gives us our identity, our name, our meaning. I am speaking, of course, of the One Church as it is spread out gloriously through all space and time. I am speaking of that Company which includes Seth and Noah, Abraham and Moses, David and Jeremiah, Peter and Paul, Tertullian and Luther, and those many millions more to whom the grace of God has come. Of this Company we who call ourselves Christians are members. To this company we belong. This is our milieu. To this our entire life is oriented. From this we draw strength and inspiration. In view of this we are proud and hold our head erect. — Or is this not so?

ARE we perhaps not proud? Do we perhaps go with head hung low, with apologetic gait and abject demeanor? Do we perhaps live in this world as if we had no past, no history, no tradition? Do we perhaps live as aliens in the world, as though we did not "belong"?

If so we had better recollect that the Church we are members of is in the world. It is on earth. It is a fraternity existing in time; it is an historical magnitude moving on the horizontal plane. It is as actual and concrete as a family, a race, or a nation.

Having reminded ourselves of this we may observe that it is more important, more illustrious, older, and stronger than any of the other communities, groups, or associations that exist on earth. This community rode out the flood, despoiled the Egyptians, penned the psalms, stopped the mouths of lions, raised up the gothic cathedrals, laid the foundations of modern states, abolished slavery, wrote the world's best lyrics . . . "and what shall I say more? for the time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jepthah; of David and Samuel and the prophets"; of Athanasius and Constantine and Cyprian; of Augustine, Charlemagne, and Gregory; of Bernard and Thomas and Dante; of Calvin and Milton and Cromwell . . .

This is no little thing. This is no petty tradition. We have no hollow past. The context we stand in is not narrow and bare. And since this is what we belong to, we dare not be timid. Surely no man who has gotten into this can cower. Does the lady say her ancestor fought at Bunker Hill? Mine climbed the broken walls of Jericho. Does the Jew call Abraham his father? I claim him first: it is not as a Jew that Abraham is significant, but as a Believer; and I am Abraham's child.

As Christians, then, we can be done with the abject and servile attitude. One is our Lord, and before Him we bow; but for our faith, for our Church, we make no apologies to men. We are a kingly race, a royal priesthood, a chosen people. God made us this, and there can be no boasting; but there can be recognition and gratitude. And there can be the uplifted head, and the steady hands, and the unwavering knees, and the bold and forthright witness.

It is one thing to be proud of that to which we belong; it is another to be disciplined by it; and the last is what is required. It is in this history, this tradition, that we stand; it is the context of our lives. This being so, we must let it define and form us. We must allow it to pour its strength into us. It is only so that we shall acquire depth and scope, stability and direction. It is only so that we shall become mature. It is only so that we shall become Christians in the fullest sense of the word.

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